

REPORT ON THE JOINT DONOR FACT FINDING MISSION TO JAFFNA

DATE: 2-4 February 2005

PARTICIPATION: DFID, USAID

Recommendations

- Holistic approach needed, to ensure equity among activities directed toward conflict IDPs, tsunami affected people, and the host community;
- Targeted planning of interventions, and monitoring of implementation needed to prevent unnecessary assistance and to promote transparency (avoiding further conflict trigger);
- Premium on coordination/clarity of livelihood restoration strategy;
- Strengthening of Wat/San coordination with medium- and long-term shelter strategy.

General Overview

1. Jaffna, the northernmost district of Sri Lanka, was not hit as badly by the tsunami as other districts. 2,640 people died, 1,647 were injured, and some 40,000 were initially displaced. Approximately 20 of the district's 400 *Grama Sevaka* (GS) were affected by the tsunami, with the humanitarian impact strongest in the north-eastern tip (Point Pedro), as it is more densely populated than areas further south on the eastern coast. The tsunami also reached islands off the north-western coast, mainly causing damage to livelihoods and infrastructure. More serious human impact was mitigated by the fact that a large amount of coastline is inaccessible to civilians, having been declared off limits "high security zones." It should be noted that some of the hardest hit divisions of Jaffna are in LTTE-controlled territory.

2. 37 Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) in schools and temples were established in the first week. There are now seven TACs in government-controlled areas of Jaffna, sheltering approximately 800 families (3,000 people). Interim Resettlement Camps with transitional shelter are being constructed, with water and sanitation needs included.

3. The 500,000 population of Jaffna district¹ have been displaced from their homes at least once during the last 15-20 years due to the conflict. There are currently approximately 63,810 conflict IDPs in Jaffna, 8,954 of whom live in welfare camps², unable to return to their homes in high security zones and/or other conflict-affected areas. This underlies the description given to the 26 December disaster by the GoSL's Government Agent in Jaffna of "the second tsunami." A ceasefire agreement was negotiated between the GoSL and LTTE in February 2002. The subsequent peace talks were halted in April 2003. Despite this, the ceasefire has remained in place. As a result of the conflict, civilians in Jaffna are accustomed to emergency situations – tsunami-affected populations moved into collective centre sites previously used for conflict displacement and registered with local governmental structures (and LTTE representatives) automatically.

Local Coordination

4. As a result of the conflict, inter-agency coordination mechanisms pre-existed the tsunami and were well placed to respond. Most INGOs established a presence after the 2002 ceasefire. Local NGOs have been operating for longer. There were 23 INGOs present in the district prior to the tsunami working on conflict-related issues. Now there are approximately 30. For most UN agencies and INGOs, tsunami relief represented a fairly simple extension of their previous activities. For

¹ It should be noted that the GoSL 2001 census figure for Jaffna is an estimate, at 490,621. The census report notes that the quoted figure is based on the pre-census listing/numbering process, rather than on actual enumeration. The 1981 census reported an enumerated population of 738,788 for Jaffna.

² UNHCR Statistical Summary for Jaffna District, 30 November 2004

example, ICRC was able to channel stocks of household supplies normally used to serve IDPs toward tsunami relief programming.

5. Established coordination mechanisms contributed to the fact that there was no disaster post-emergency (beyond the immediate loss of life). UNHCR is the designated lead agency on information for the tsunami. Sectoral working groups are functioning with UNICEF lead on health, psychosocial, education; GTZ lead on livelihoods; ICRC lead on tracing and health support; WFP lead on food; ACF on wat/san; UNDP on mine action, mapping and logistics; and HALO on mine clearance. There has been no large influx of new NGOs seeking projects, as reported in other areas.

6. As noted above, there is relatively tight coordination in most sectors. The fact finding team observed the need for strengthening coordination/decision-making in **livelihood restoration**, where it was noted that the German NGO Humedica (www.humedica.de) moved unilaterally to give up to 1,000 fibre-glass boats as a grant to local fishermen. In addition, the coordination of **wat/san** and **shelter** is all-important for appropriate decision-making both for transitional as well as long-term housing solutions.

7. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami the LTTE political wing took the lead role in organizing a task force, calling the meetings in the city of Nelliadi. Local and international NGOs as well as the UN agencies attended these initial meetings. Within one week, the GoSL established its coordinating body, and eventually centralized coordination. This government-managed process includes the Tamil Relief Organization, INGOs and UN actors, as well as politicians from the Tamil National Alliance and the Elam People's Democratic Party.

8. Registration of damage and affected populations by both the government and LTTE started quickly, with records largely coinciding. This, combined with the unification of coordination, was described by UN actors as a significant achievement. The LTTE created task force is still a major player.

9. There is now a view amongst INGOs that support should be given to the GA in order to free up his time to concentrate on macro policy issues. There is a view that the GA's participation in sectoral meetings should be delegated. The GA stated that he had received enough support in terms of information and coordination capacity – though a UNV was only deployed to his offices at the beginning of February.

10. In terms of inter-agency coordination sector working groups, UNICEF is pushing for a revision of terms of reference and participation to meet the needs of the evolving situation.

Coordination – Centre to district

11. There is a time-lag between policy generation at the central level and engagement at district level. The GA is not receiving enough information on the government policy from central levels, either from the CNO or from line ministries. This is particularly important in the area of shelter strategies. UNHCR commenced building temporary shelter units last week, in advance of arrival of central government policy (but in anticipation of its arrival, approval, and implementation in coordination with the GA). Conversely, in the education sector, decisions are being made at the central level without waiting for the normal local evaluation and consultation process to be completed.

Political Situation

12. As part of the ceasefire agreement of 2002, the LTTE are allowed to open political offices in areas with large Tamil populations. The LTTE are influential in civilian life, even having a women's wing, and children's and women's desks. There are Tamil links throughout civil society. Government

appointments have to be approved by the LTTE (as an unwritten rule). In the case of the tsunami response, officially the GA is in charge; unofficially the LTTE still has its own response. The GA and military commanders in Jaffna district play a delicate balancing act between policy dictated by the centre, and local political pressures. This is reflected in TAC management, for example, where LTTE and Government officials are both present despite the GoSL policy that the military would be in charge of all TACs.

13. Mr. K. Ganesh, the new GA, assumed his post on 1 January 2005. He has extensive experience in other LTTE areas such as Vavunia. He also has good relations with the military and the LTTE. Prior to his appointment, the existence of parallel coordination groups (Govt and LTTE) was problematic. The LTTE-led group attempted to take control by asking NGOs and other actors to undertake direct taskings without going first through the GA. The UN views the LTTE as a non-state actor and does not take direct taskings from them. However it does meet regularly with the LTTE and will share information if it is channelled through the GA. All INGOs have this stated policy. However, INGOs that have no international staff in Jaffna may be under more local political pressure. Local NGOs can be expected to receive pressure from all sides.

14. The GA sees an opportunity for honest approaches on both sides working in partnership to deliver assistance. He feels that this could build trust and serve as the basis for bringing the sides together in the search for a durable solution to the conflict

Equality in provision of assistance: Tsunami-affected IDPs versus other vulnerable groups

15. There appears to be an understanding and empathy amongst local and conflict IDP populations of the loss suffered by the tsunami-affected IDPs. UNHCR state that the shelter units currently being constructed for tsunami IDPs are the same as kits distributed to IDPs in welfare camps in 2004. INGO programmes targeted to the conflict-affected population were planned for 2005, and whilst their start-up may have been delayed due to the tsunami, many have now begun. Local NGOs describe the situation of conflict IDPs as “normalised” though IDPs living in camps are still dependent on food aid (with poor distribution), and have no opportunity to return to their homes or resume geographically-dependent livelihoods. The longest established welfare centres are 14 years old.

16. Despite the lack of disquiet to date, the focus on provision of large amounts of assistance to those affected by the tsunami (for example large in-kind grants), might present problems of disparity not only between conflict- and tsunami-affected IDPs, but also amongst the general population. The overall picture presented by Jaffna is that of an under-developed and conflict damaged region with little or no infrastructure, no investment, high unemployment (estimated at 90 percent amongst 18-35 year olds by IOM), politicised civil society, dual governmental control, and restrictive military measures. One NGO representative said that in the case of her organization, conflict-affected IDPs were “not getting a third of what was being planned for the tsunami-affected population.”

17. Most of the tsunami-affected population are fishing families. Their societies are well-organized and have connections to political and decision-making structures in Jaffna. On the other hand, conflict IDPs are largely disenfranchised, and therefore lack critical lobbying leverage in their pursuit of services and support.

SECTOR SPECIFIC REVIEW

Shelter

18. There are 6,084 fully damaged houses and 1,114 partially damaged houses in the district. The lack of clarity on whether or not the ban on construction within 100 metres of the shoreline will be enforced is hindering forward movement. The issue is compounded by lack of state land in Jaffna district, due to the designation of large areas as “high security zones,” and the fact that much land is privately owned by absentee landlords. The GA noted that acquisition of private land was notoriously difficult. The 100m rule is also made moot in practical terms in many areas of the East coast, where the topography is flat in some areas allowing water to come inland as far as 5 km.

19. According to UNHCR, the issue of mixed policy over the use of tents did not arise in Jaffna district as it did in other LTTE areas. The team still came across unused tent stocks during a visit to Point Pedro. The majority of tsunami-IDPs are living with friends and relatives. There are currently seven TACs housing approximately 800 families.



20. UNHCR have encouraged resettlement from collective centres in schools and temples, to Interim Resettlement Camps (IRCs). 18 sites for IRCs, all of which are privately owned, have been identified and evaluated; consent letters from landlords permitting use of the land for 6-9 months are required. The construction of transitional shelter units began last week. The mission viewed a model temporary shelter unit in Point Pedro, with nearby land designated for construction. This unit has a cost of USD 350.00³.

21. There has been no official information campaign by local authorities to inform people about their entitlements or government transitional shelter/reconstruction policy, however due to the well established civil society networks, information is thought to be reasonably well disseminated at this point.

22. There is no discussion as yet of permanent housing options. UNHCR stated that they will not be involved in permanent shelter activities. The SL Red Cross noted that there was a difference in policy on a permanent housing plan between the government and the LTTE and that negotiations would have to be held to come to a consensus.

Food Assistance

23. Large amounts of food aid are not required in Jaffna. Problems are experienced in terms of stocks and pipelines.

24. IDPs living with family or friends are entitled to Rs. 200 per person per week in vouchers redeemable for foodstuffs at the government-operated Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society stores, as

³ Photograph shows a model transitional shelter unit viewed in Point Pedro, 17ft by 11ft, with zinc aluminium sheet roof, concrete pillars and base. A 3 foot wall will be built around the base, with plastic sheeting dividers and walls added. Local reps commented that they would use wood pillars instead of concrete pillars for future units.

well as Rs. 175 of food in-kind. Those IDPs residing in institutional TACs receive a package valued at Rs. 315 per person per week.

25. It should be noted that a government-operated program provided food rations for all families earning less than Rs. 2,500 per month prior to the tsunami. Though functional, this program has been plagued by supply problems and distribution delays.

Livelihoods/income-generating activities

26. The GA describes livelihoods as a top priority, and noted that he will chair the sectoral working group dealing with issue.

27. The UN state they expect fisher-labourers to be without an income for at least two months. According to IOM, of the tsunami-affected population, 80-85 percent were said to be dependent on fishing. Of the overall population of Jaffna, 40 percent are dependent on fishing (20 percent earn their livelihood primarily from agriculture - vegetable crops, tobacco, and paddy crops restricted to the rainy season). Civilians do not have access to the harbour or 80 percent of the coastal fishing areas. Fishermen's Cooperative Societies were established prior to the tsunami. Boats were purchased either through micro-credit from NGOs, or with bank loans (only those purchased in the past year). INGOs have reportedly announced that their loans will be forgiven. A decision by private banks is awaited.

Wat/San

28. Wat/San needs in TACs were covered. Some coordination issues arose with regard to the location of latrines in one IRC (close to a temple). Drinking water is supplied by tanker, as is the situation in most of Jaffna district due to lack of piped water. Well water is used for washing, and well cleaning was underway with both NGOs and the army carrying out these activities; some 700 wells are affected.

29. Sector coordination should be strengthened to ensure proper consideration of wat/san issues in shelter decision-making and to guarantee active involvement of the Water Board in relevant activities. There seem to be gaps in coordination between state actors and NGOs, and WHO commented that five different line ministries are involved in water supply, compounding service delivery problems.

30. The GA is holding out hope for Rs. 290 million project that will bring piped water to Jaffna. The design exists. When asked as to the likelihood of this project being implemented, he did not answer.

Education

31. Three schools were severely damaged in government-controlled areas. In addition, some schools are still being used as TACs. However, space-sharing arrangements, re-enrolment of students in nearby schools and construction of temporary classrooms have permitted all children to return to school in government-controlled areas, according to UNICEF.

32. Concern was expressed with regard to areas further south along the Jaffna coastline that are controlled by the LTTE. All eight of the schools in this zone are severely damaged. UNICEF are discussing the construction of temporary classrooms. Coordination of school reconstruction has been managed by the government with a top-down approach.

33. UNICEF has distributed 122 school-in-a-box kits. Each kit provides materials for 80 students plus two teachers.

Protection and Psychosocial

34. Support in this area has been provided to tsunami-affected IDPs. UN policy favours group counselling. There was an evident level of distress at the TAC visited by the team. The Fishermen's Cooperative Society interviewed at a different location in Point Pedro commented that efforts were being made to recreate some structure in people's lives by organising shift work for debris clearance whilst people waited for reestablishment of livelihood activities.

35. The SL Red Cross reported having trained 20 teachers and 20 counsellors to provide such support.

36. There is an holistic approach including all vulnerable groups – conflict IDPs, tsunami-affected people and the host population – in activities in this sector (seemingly lacking in other sectors). UNICEF is supporting several local NGOs in implementation of recreation centres for children and group therapy for both conflict and tsunami-affected populations.

37. UNICEF reported that it had received no reports of children being recruited by the LTTE from TACs. Both Save the Children and UNICEF monitor and advocate on child rights issues. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) record cases of under-age recruitment as violations of the ceasefire agreement.

Health

38. There are no reports of specific health problems or disease outbreaks in the aftermath of the tsunami.

39. WHO are opening an office with five international staff members due to run for the course of one year. UNICEF plans to propose that WHO take the lead in this sector. WHO state that epidemiology is a priority, though this does not seem to be mirrored by comments from other actors.

40. WHO state that there are no data gathering systems at the local level to allow a response from central government. This is a reflection of the chronic understaffing of the MOH in the district, not a result of the tsunami.

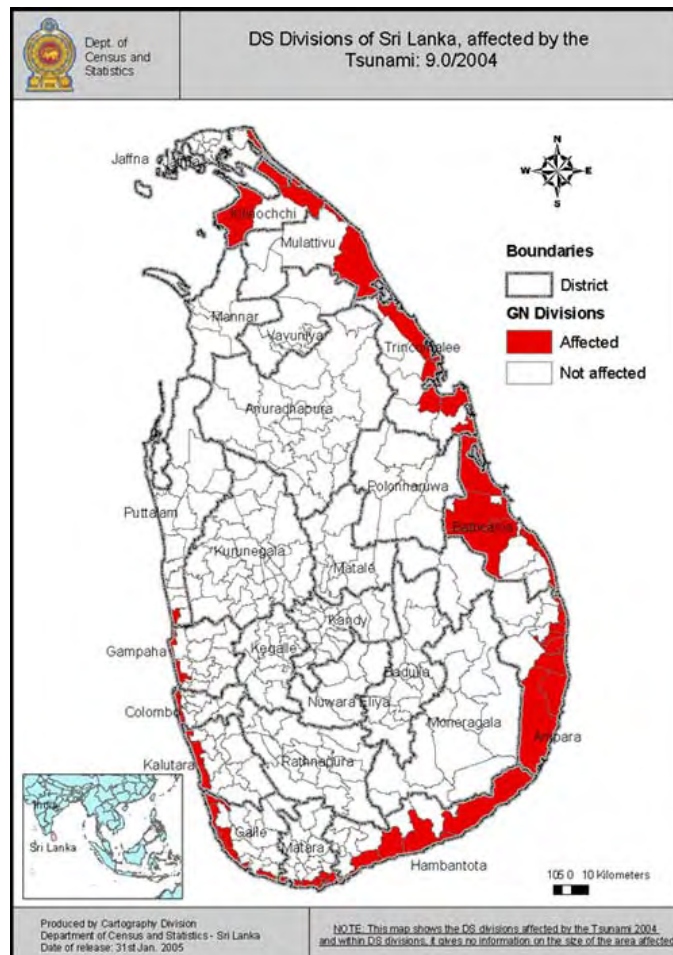
From 2 – 4 February, the joint donor fact finding mission met with:

UNHCR, IOM, Sri Lankan Red Cross, ICRC, ACF, UNICEF, WHO, the Government Agent, THW, GTZ, Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (monitoring ceasefire agreement) Save the Children, Local NGOs Tamil Relief and Rehabilitation Organisation, Non-Violent Direct Action Group, Fisherman's Cooperative Society of Thumpali East, and IDPs staying in a TAC at Varaani School.

JAFFNA DISTRICT



TSUNAMI AFFECTED REGIONS OF SRI LANKA



TSUNAMI-DISPLACED POPULATION

